

CITY OF COHOES OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

WILLIAM T. KEELER
Mayor

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April 12, 2021

Jay DiLorenzo, President
Preservation League of New York State
44 Central Avenue
Albany, NY 12206

Dear Mr. DiLorenzo:

As part of our comprehensive Restore Historic Cohoes initiative, and in conjunction with the 150th anniversary of its opening in 1874 and the 50th anniversary of its reopening in 1974, by 2024 the City of Cohoes seeks to restore our Cohoes Music Hall Theater, and preserve the historic National Bank Building this rare performance space and the city's Visitors Center are located within. As an essential step in that process, we are seeking support and guidance from the Preservation League of New York State.

It is our hope that we can benefit from the expert guidance of the Preservation League for the duration of this exciting, important, yet challenging multi-phase, multi-million-dollar endeavor. Initially we are requesting a \$16,500 grant to offset the \$37,000 expense for a comprehensive Building Condition Survey, to be conducted by Lacey, Thaler, Reilly, Wilson Architecture & Preservation LLP. Information derived from the report will be used to set project priorities and timelines, to inform and engage the community, and to apply for funding (Federal, State, local, Foundation and other philanthropic) required to implement the plans.

The Cohoes Music Hall is a gem in need of polish. Its historic and majestic ceiling has deteriorated significantly and visibly since it was last restored in the 1970's. Evidence of water infiltration into the building can be seen in the deterioration of parts of the ceiling. Damage has been done by careless alterations to the interior of the Hall which did not respect the history of the space. No doubt some of the mechanical systems have outlived their expected life. While some important work has been done – on the windows, for example – it is clear that the Hall is suffering from deferred maintenance and lack of attention to its historic significance.

Opened in 1874, the Cohoes Music Hall is the 4th oldest operational music hall in the United States. Its architectural style, its history of hosting celebrated performers and performances, and its role as a gathering space for important celebrations and other moments of note in the life of our community all make it worthy of our efforts to sustain it. Its economic importance and historic significance to our community cannot be discounted.

Nearly 150 years ago two business and civic leaders filled a space, left vacant by a fire, with this notable structure containing the magical Music Hall. Nearly 50 years ago members of the Cohoes community, with the support of others in the Capitol Region and beyond, rallied together to reopen the theater after a 60 year pause. As current owners and stewards of the building it is now our opportunity and obligation to do everything possible to take proper care of this “anchor building” in our community so that 50 years, or even 150 years from now others might still be enjoying its benefits.

In 2020 we established the city moto “Honor the Past, Explore the Present, Inspire the Future.” It is our intent to do just that with the Cohoes Music Hall, and the National Bank Building in which it resides. We welcome your organization’s support in our endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W. T. Keeler', with a stylized flourish at the end.

William T. Keeler, Mayor
City of Cohoes